

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 and 33-42 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Thailand Patent No. 20241.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The claims have been amended to more clearly define the invention.

As now amended, the claims are directed to a method of loading a film assembly. The film assembly includes a first film container having an internal spool and an additional spoolless film container having a length of film, a majority of which is wound in the spoolless film container, and which extends to the first film container. The method includes the steps of providing a bulk roll film, wherein a free end is withdrawn therefrom and secured to a film winding tool. In a dark environment, the film winding tool is rotated to wind the film into a coil about the tool. The wound coil is removed from the film winding tool and the coil is enclosed in the additional film container so that the film extends through a film slot located therein. Before or after the removal step, the film which was unwound from the bulk roll is cut, thereby providing a trailing end and then the trailing end of film is secured to the first film container.

On the other hand, the Thai application is directed to the application of winding film into a spoolless container from a conventional 35 mm film patron or cassette. This patron or cassette, must first be loaded with film by a film winding operation about the central spool. This step is usually carried out by the film manufacturer. As discussed throughout the description, the Thai application teaches insertion of the film winding tool into the additional spoolless container, with the film being wound out of the 35 mm patron into the spoolless container about the winding tool. More specifically, the film end is secured to the shaft and

the main body of the cartridge pushed over the shaft so that the film extends through the slot. After winding, the shaft is withdrawn, leaving the wound coil inside the cartridge, which is then closed by an end cap or plug.

It will be appreciated that the Applicant's method of assembly includes one winding step wherein the Thai application has undergone two winding steps, firstly into a 35 mm cassette, and secondly out of this cassette into a spoolless cartridge. Two winding steps means that there are two opportunities presented for the film to acquire surface scratches or other film damage. The occurrence of scratches during these winding operations has a significant effect on the ultimate quality of the film and the pictures derived therefrom.

Additionally, the Thai action of winding film into the spoolless film cartridge suffers from disadvantages in that it severely restricts the speed at which winding can be effected, as well as making it more difficult to control a high speed winding operation.

As discussed in the present description, the film assembly which results from a loading method as claimed has particular applicability when used in very simple types of cameras, previously single-use or disposable but now adapted for limited re-use, intended to be sold commonly with film already packaged inside. In such cameras, cost is a major factor, with the film a major part of the cost, and a significant part of the cost of the film assembly arises from the production cost of carrying out the winding operation. The greatly improved speed of winding, which can occur because of the winding technique as claimed in the Applicant's invention, is highly beneficial in terms of overall film assembly production costs.

Finally, the step of securing the trailing end of film to the first film container can be carried out in daylight, and thus this step does not greatly contribute to the manufacturing cost,

whereby daylight processing or assembly is considerably more convenient and readily performed than those steps necessarily requiring a dark environment.

As independent claims 43 and 53 are patently distinguishable from the prior art references, the remaining claims dependent therefrom are also patently distinguishable.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the amended claims and the claims dependent there from are in proper form. The Applicant respectfully contends that the teachings of Thai Patent No. 20241 do not anticipate the claimed invention under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Thus, claims 43-55 are considered to be patently distinguishable over the prior art of record.

The application is now considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Arlene J. Powers
Registration No. 35,985
Samuels, Gauthier & Stevens
225 Franklin Street, Suite 3300
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
Telephone: (617) 426-9180
Extension 110